

VZCZCXR07546

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBW RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLM RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHPG #0285 1281544
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 071544Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0306
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0084

UNCLAS PRAGUE 000285

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM BM EZ EUN
SUBJECT: CZECHS PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF BURMA,
WHILE REMAINING CRITICAL OF REGIME

REF: A. STATE 45471
1B. PRAGUE 257

¶11. (U) The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on May 5 that the Czech government will provide 2.5M crowns (just over 150,000 USD) in humanitarian assistance for the International Red Cross to respond to the devastation of cyclone Nagris in Burma. The Czech NGO People in Need (PIN) is also putting together a package of assistance. PIN's current plan is to provide 500,000 crowns (just over 30,000 USD) in immediate assistance and then to reassess the humanitarian needs of the Burmese people once PIN has more detailed information from counterparts on the ground. PIN then plans to initiate a national appeal here in the Czech Republic to address these specific needs.

¶12. (SBU) With respect to the referendum on the Burmese constitution, the Government of the Czech Republic shares our reservations, and as highlighted previously (Reftel B), they have actively engaged within the EU at the Asia Working Group Committee to press for greater pressure on the regime and to support strong language in the EU Foreign Minister's GAERC conclusions of April 29. Through the spring the Czech MFA Department of Human Rights and Transition Policy has met and stayed in contact with Burmese dissident Min Zin to discuss the flaws in the newly drafted Burmese constitution as well as the ways in which the regime is promoting the referendum. Also noteworthy is the Czech MFA public statement of April 24 highlighting Czech concerns regarding the state of health of Mr. Min Ko Naing, a key Burmese student leader who remains in prison in Burma following his arrested in 1988. In the MFA statement the Czechs note that Mr. Min Ko Naing is in substantial pain for an eye condition which requires medical attention and could result in blindness if left untreated. The Czechs also site other examples of the Burmese regime's unwillingness to provide access to medical treatment for other political prisoners, such as Aung San Suu Kyi and U Myint Thein in its statement.

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